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Investigation of (1) whether or not significant changes in attitudes of Indiana University elementary education students toward pupil-teacher relations, as measured by MTAI, occur during various phases of their training and experience and (2) whether any change in attitude of trainees gravitated toward the attitudinal level of their methods instructors and supervising teachers. Lists eight conclusions based on findings.

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"A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EXPRESSED ATTITUDES OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION STUDENTS, THEIR UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTORS, AND THEIR SUPERVISING TEACHERS TOWARD PUPIL-TEACHER RELATIONS AS MEASURED BY THE MINNESOTA TEACHER ATTITUDE INVENTORY,"

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
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The Problem

The purposes of this investigation were: (1) to determine whether or not significant changes in the attitudes of representative elementary education students toward pupil-teacher relations as measured by the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory (MTAI) occur during the various phases of their professional training and experience, and (2) if significant changes were discovered, to determine whether change in the attitudes of trainees gravitated toward the attitudinal level of their methods instructors and their supervising teachers.

Sources of Data

The School of Education, Indiana University, was selected as a source of subjects because the training appeared representative of major teacher training institutions, and because faculty interest in the problem provided ready cooperation.

The data used in this study were obtained from 123 elementary education students, 11 methods instructors, and 151 supervising teachers during three consecutive semesters beginning February of 1955.

Methods and Procedures

The Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory was administered to two groups of elementary education majors at Indiana University during the two-semester sequence of professional training and experience. During the period from February 11, 1955, to May 24, 1956, measurements were obtained from the 43 students constituting Group I and the 80 students constituting Group II at the beginning and end of their methods courses, and at the beginning and end of their post-student-teaching workshops; an additional fifth score was obtained from Group I at the end of summer vacation.

Single scores on the inventory were obtained from the 11 methods instructors and 151 supervising teachers.

ED000377 IV-9

Fisher's "t" test was applied to all possible pairings of administrations of the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory to both groups of subjects to determine whether or not significant changes occurred.

In the second portion of the study the investigator attempted to determine whether or not the final attitudinal level of a student was related to the attitudinal level of his supervising teacher.

For this analysis all students who had been supervised by only one supervising teacher were aggregated from Groups I and II. The 73 subjects resulting from this selection were grouped into "high," "medium," and "low" groups on the basis of the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory scores of their supervising teachers.

In order to disassociate differences that might have existed in the initial attitudes of students from their final level, the analysis of corvariance was computed between all consecutive points of measurement for the three groups as described above.

Findings

The findings obtained in this study are summarized under four questions which embrace the purposes of the investigation as follows:

1. Do significant changes occur in the attitudes of subjects toward Pupil-teacher relations as measured by the MTAI at selected points during the professional sequence?

Changes significant at the one per cent level of confidence occurred at six points of comparison in the Group I sequence. These points were: (1) the beginning of methods to the end of methods; (2) the end of methods to the end of student teaching; (3) the end of methods to the end of summer vacation; (4) the end of student teaching to the end of the workshop; (5) the beginning of methods to the end of the workshop; and (6) the end of summer vacation to the end of the workshop.

Changes significant at the one per cent level of confidence occurred at five points of comparison in the Group II sequence. These points were: (1) the beginning of methods to the end of methods; (2) the end of student teaching to the end of the workshop; (3) the beginning of methods to the end of student teaching; (4) the end of methods to the end of the workshop; and (5) the beginning of methods to the end of the workshop.

The following points of significant differences in mean sources were common to Groups I and II: (1) the beginning of methods to the end of methods; (2) the end of student teaching to the end of the workshop; and (3) the beginning of methods to the end of the workshop. Of the three points of

significant difference peculiar to Group I, two involved comparison with the end of summer vacation, which was not common to the sequence of Group II. The three points were: (1) the end of methods to the end of summer vacation; (2) the end of summer vacation to the end of the workshop; and (3) the end of methods to the end of student teaching. Since all measures of the Group II sequence were common to Group I, Group II had the following points of singularity: (1) the beginning of methods to the end of student teaching; and (2) the end of methods to the end of the workshop.

2. Which phases of the professional sequence are accompanied by the greatest change in the attitudes of subjects toward pupil-teacher relations as measured by the MTAI?

In the order of the highest to the lowest magnitude of difference the following changes significant beyond the one per cent level of confidence occurred in the attitudes of Group I: (1) the end of student teaching to the end of the workshop; (2) the beginning of methods to the end of methods; (3) the end of methods to the end of student teaching; (4) the end of methods to the end of summer vacation; (5) the beginning of methods to the end of the workshop; and (6) the end of summer vacation to the end of the workshop. Measurements (1), (2), (5), and (6) represented significant gains, while measurements (3) and (4) represented significant losses.

In the same order of magnitude of difference, changes significant beyond the one per cent level of confidence in the attitudes of Group II were: (1) the beginning of methods to the end of the workshop; (2) the end of student teaching to the end of the workshop; (3) the end of methods to the end of the workshop; (4) the beginning of methods to the end of methods; and (5) the beginning of methods to the end of student teaching. All significant changes in Group II as indicated by measurements (1) to (5), inclusive, were positive in nature.

Points of significant change common to both groups were: the end of student teaching to the end of the workshop; the beginning of methods to the end of the workshop; and the beginning of methods to the end of methods. All of these points of change were positive in nature.

3. If significant changes occur in the attitudes of subjects toward pupil-teacher relations as measured by the MTAI, do the changes tend to gravitate toward the level of the persons responsible for that phase of training?

The attitudinal level of the students of both groups rose toward the attitudinal level of their university instructors at the end of the periods under their direct supervision; these periods were the end of methods

courses and the end of the workshops. The mean score of Group I students dropped toward the attitudinal level of supervising teachers by the end of student teaching; Group II declined during the same period, but not significantly.

Students under the direction of supervising teachers ranked as "high" and "medium" on the inventory did significantly better than students under the direction of "low" ranked supervising teachers at the end of the workshop as compared with the beginning of methods, and at the end of the workshop as compared with the beginning of student teaching.

4. What effect does an interval during which subjects are not undergoing professional training (namely, summer vacation) have on the level of their attitudes toward pupil-teacher relations as measured by the MTAI?

Group I subjects reverted to an attitudinal level not statistically different from their level prior to professional training. Since Group II did not have this intermission in professional sequence, no assessment could be made of them.

Conclusions

Within the limitations of this study, and in light of the obtained findings, the following conclusions appear valid:

1. The attitudinal levels of elementary education students toward pupil-teacher relations were flexible and fluctuating, since directional changes were evidenced during periods of methodology training, summer vacation, student teaching, and the re-training of the post-student teacher workshop.

2. The post-student teaching workshop constituted the single phase of the professional sequence of elementary education students which was accompanied by the greatest change in their attitudinal level. Since this change was positive in nature, the workshop would appear to be an efficient and economical method of re-training.

3. An interruption of three months in the professional program of elementary education students after one semester of concentrated training in methodology was accompanied by a reversion to an attitudinal level not statistically different from their level prior to training.

4. The leadership of supervising teachers who were ranked "low" on the MTAI was associated with retardation in the attitudinal growth of their student teachers during the post-student teaching workshop.

5. Since fluctuation in the attitudinal levels of the two groups of elementary education students toward pupil-teacher relations was more characteristic than stability, it may be concluded that the subjects did not possess a sufficiently broad and reasoned basis for judgment that would have enabled them to transcend the climates of differentiated social and professional environments

6. If extensive specific and generalized understandings of child growth and development constitute some of the factors essential to a high and stabilized attitudinal level in respect to pupil-teacher relations the following inferences may be warranted: (1) basic psychology courses have a direct and fundamental responsibility in developing professional convictions which provide stability and objectivity for the trainee when he is faced with lower levels of professional leadership and when he experiences directly difficulties in the management of teaching-learning wituations; (2) close and continuous liaison between the university instructors of methods and psychology courses would be highly desirable as an enabling process for integrating the learnings in the area of child growth and development with learnings in the area of methodology.

7. Mediation of the loss in the attitudinal level of elementary education trainees during the experience of student teaching might be effected by: (1) greater discrimination in the selection of supervising teachers, (2) in-service training of supervising teachers, and (3) inculcation of a broader basis for convictions toward the management of teacher-learning situations in the preparation of trainees during child development and methodology courses.

8. Since the observation and participation phase of the methodology semester constitutes the closest approximation to teaching experience prior to student teaching, it should be fully exploited for integrating previous learnings so as to provide a strong and stable matrix of professional attitudes.